1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
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sume away before they arrive at manhood; others grow prematurely old, and die an untimely death. Do you enquire the cause? I will tell you my opinion on the subject. Many are unhealthy because their parents are so; others from being oppressed with labour, and very poorly provided with food, clothes, and lodging; the majority because they have exhausted their natural vigour by indulging from their earliest youth in shameful pleasures. *Libidinosa etenim, et intemperans adolescentia effœtum corpus tradit senectuti*, as Cicero observes, in his treatise on Old Age. How many of those who die a premature death would deserve to have this epitaph engraven on their tomb, *Nequitiæ est quæ te non sinit esse senem.* Too early marriages are often a cause why we find the other Indians weaker and less vigorous and long-lived than the Abipones, who never think of entering the matrimonial state till they are near thirty years old, and never marry a woman under twenty; which, as philosophers and physicians say, conduces much to the preservation of strength, lengthening of life, and producing robust children. It cannot be doubted, that tender parents never produce very strong children; and since the affections of the mind are consequences of the habit of the body, as Galen teaches with much prolixity, it cannot be won-

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along with many others. Of what death, or in what place Caëperlahachin died, I am still ignorant.

The liberty of wandering at will, the abundant supply of food and clothing, the multitude of horses, the power of being as idle and profligate as they chose, and the completest impunity, where neither law nor censure is to be apprehended, bind the Spanish captives to the Abipones with so sweet a chain, that they prefer their captivity to freedom, forgetful of their relations and their country, where they know that they must live in obedience to the laws, and labour daily, unless they choose to endure stripes and hunger. I have known captives of so bad a disposition that their masters were glad to get rid of them without ransom. In many of the captives you would look in vain for the least trace of a Christian, or even of a man. Very few of the Abipones have many wives at a time, though they account polygamy lawful; the captives, seldom content with one, marry as many Spanish or Indian captives as they can. For the Abiponian women scorn to marry either Spaniards, or Indians of any other nation, unless, by the splendour of their achievements, namely, slaughters and rapine, they be reputed Abipones in nobility. The men too, accounting themselves

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more noble than any other nation, never deign [186]
to marry the Spanish captives, much less to 582
have any clandestine intercourse with them: 727
so that their virtue would be safer in captivity amongst the savages, than in freedom amongst their own countrymen, could they escape the seductive arts of their fellow captives. In confession, I found most of the female Spaniards, after a very long captivity amongst the Abipones, guilty of no trespass upon the laws of chastity. They all agreed in confessing that no woman need go astray amongst these savages, unless she herself chose it. I can say as much for the continence of the young men, who had been long captives amongst them.

The gentle reader will pardon this digression 574
concerning captives, if indeed it be a digression, 648
because it does much towards establishing a good opinion of the chastity and benevolence of the Abipones, which form the subject of the present chapter, and will be further confirmed by additional arguments. They hospitably entertain Spaniards of the lower order, Negroes or Christian Indians, who have run away from their masters, lost their way, or, by some other means, chanced to enter the hordes of the Abipones, and, in the most friendly manner, offer them food or any thing else they may stand in need of; this they do the more cordially the

586 injuries is refreshed in the minds of the intoxicated guests, the relations fiercely avenge the dishonour done to the repudiated wife. Often, [587] too, women just cast off by one man are immediately married by another. I have observed [797] elsewhere that the younger women highly approve the law of Christ, and are anxious that themselves and their husbands should be baptized, because the perpetuity of their marriage is thereby secured, and their husbands prevented from changing or increasing the number [182] of their wives. This licence of divorce pro- [847] duces, as I have already related, bloody murders of children, and the incredible diminution of the whole nation.

• 582 You will find many things worthy of reprehension, but at the same time not a few deserving of praise, in the married state of the Abiponces. I will inform you of those most worthy of mention. [795] Though the paternal indulgence of the Roman pontiffs makes the first and second degrees of relationship alone a bar to the marriage off the Indians, yet the Abipones, instructed by nature and the example of their ancestors, abhor the very thought of marrying any one related to them by the most distant tie of relationship. Long experience has convinced me, that this respect to consanguinity, by which they are deterred from marrying into their own families,

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is implanted by nature in the minds of most of the people of Paraguay. In this opinion I was greatly confirmed by the Cacique Roÿ, leader of the savages in the woods of Mbacverà, who, when I was explaining the heads of religion to the surrounding multitude, and happened to make mention of incestuous nuptials, broke out into these words—"You say right, Father! Marriage with relations is a most shameful thing. This we have learnt from our ancestors." Such are the feelings of these wood savages, though they think it neither irrational nor improper to marry many wives, and reject them whenever they like. 582

Another admirable trait in the character of the savage Abipones is their conjugal fidelity. You never hear of this being shaken, or even attempted. Husbands are many months absent from their homes, whilst their wives remain in the midst of a horde of men without danger or even suspicion. What the Greeks have fabled of Penelope, who continued faithful to her husband Ulysses during an absence of twenty years, is the true history of the Abiponian women. But if an Abipon entertains the slightest suspicion of his wife's virtue, he does not digest it in silence, but takes ample vengeance on the person suspected though not convicted of the injury. 837 593 [684] [627]

/Amongst the other good qualities of the mar- 593